

finding given the tug of war in Congress over a health care overhaul. The poll offered a glimpse of the potential ripple effect of having no coverage. More than half characterized the cost of basic medical care as a hardship.

Many in the ranks of the unemployed appear to be rethinking their career and life choices. Just over 40 percent said they had moved or considered moving to another part of the state or country where there were more jobs. More than two-thirds of respondents had considered changing their career or field, and 44 percent of those surveyed had pursued job retraining or other educational opportunities.

Joe Whitlow, 31, of Nashville, worked as a mechanic until a repair shop he was running with a friend finally petered out in August. He had contemplated going back to school before, but the potential loss in income always deterred him. Now he is enrolled at a local community college, planning to study accounting.

"When everything went bad, not that I didn't have a choice, but it made the choice easier," Mr. Whitlow said.

The poll also shed light on the formal and informal safety nets that the jobless have relied upon. More than half said they were receiving or had received unemployment benefits. But 61 percent of those receiving benefits said the amount was not enough to cover basic necessities.

Meanwhile, a fifth said they had received food from a nonprofit organization or religious institution. Among those with a working spouse, half said their spouse had taken on additional hours or another job to help make ends meet.

Even those who have stayed employed have not escaped the recession's bite. According to a New York Times/CBS News nationwide poll conducted at the same time as the poll of unemployed adults, about 3 in 10 people said that in the past year, as a result of bad economic conditions, their pay had been cut.

In terms of casting blame for the high unemployment rate, 26 percent of unemployed adults cited former President George W. Bush; 12 percent pointed the finger at banks; 8 percent highlighted jobs going overseas and the same number blamed politicians. Only 3 percent blamed President Obama.

Those out of work were split, however, on the president's handling of job creation, with 47 percent expressing approval and 44 percent disapproval.

Unemployed Americans are divided over what the future holds for the job market: 39 percent anticipate improvement, 36 percent expect it will stay the same, and 22 percent say it will get worse.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am going to close by saying that for those who wonder if it makes any difference whether we move forward on the issue of helping the unemployed, they should read this article I have put in the RECORD. People across this country are not only worried about getting a job and taking care of their families, it has reached a point where it is dramatic. Some of them are making critical life decisions, spending their savings, with no health insurance to cover themselves or their kids.

I will ask the Republicans, who will follow me: Please, regardless of how long you want to talk today, agree with us that we should move quickly to fund our troops, send the money for those members of the military and their families to give them peace of mind we stand behind them. Do not

make them part of any political delay and strategy that leaves uncertainty. Let's do it today. Let's not wait until the money runs out tomorrow.

Let's fund our unemployment benefits too. Let's give these families, who through no fault of their own are out of work, the peace of mind of knowing that as we go home for Christmas, they will at least have a Christmas which has, even if it is small, an unemployment check.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURRIS). The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BIODIESEL TAX CREDIT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise on the issue of jobs and 10 percent unemployment and to tell my fellow Senators what we can do to preserve maybe 25,000 jobs in an industry that, by the end of the month, will be otherwise shut down because Congress is not taking action. The main point of my remarks is, if we don't extend the biodiesel tax credit by the end of the month, these jobs will be lost.

My point is 23,000 jobs will be lost. In fact, right now, on December 17, companies are making plans to shut down these operations by the end of the year.

Everybody knows our unemployment rate is 10 percent. Everybody knows the President has spent a great deal of time, over the last 2 or 3 weeks, talking about creating jobs and getting us out of the recession. But we have to remember that for those without work, this is not just a recession, it is a depression.

We all agree we should take whatever action is necessary to jump-start our economy and get people back to work. President Obama and Vice President BIDEN have been talking for months about the need to create green jobs. Well, green jobs, purple jobs, whatever kind of jobs, jobs are jobs. I don't object to the creation of green jobs. In fact, what I am talking about is some of these green jobs.

President Obama has held three public events in recent days to highlight his concern about the economy and the need to create jobs. Yesterday, the administration apparently announced billions more in tax credits for renewable energy and energy conservation efforts. I will bet when I look at that list I am going to support most of those because I believe a national energy policy involves capturing whatever we can of petroleum and fossil fuels we have available for a short period of time because we are never going to get rid of them in the short term. We need conservation, and we need renewable and alternative energy. Those three things make a comprehensive energy program. Obviously, if I am for that comprehensive energy program, I am for renewable energy and alternative energy.

It seems as if nearly everyone, in fact, in the administration is touting the benefits of green jobs and a clean energy economy and I am doing that right now myself. It is astonishing, though, with all this talk about green jobs and clean energy that this Congress right now seems to be heading for the holidays while thousands of green energy workers will receive pink slips and furloughs.

On December 31 of this year, the current biodiesel tax credit will expire. The biodiesel tax credit provides a \$1-per-gallon credit for biodiesel made from soybean oil and yellow grease and animal fats. The tax credit is essential in maintaining the competitiveness of this clean-burning, domestically produced green fuel and the jobs that are connected with it.

The tax credit exists for a common-sense reason and something we have been using for a long period of time: to offset the higher cost of producing biodiesel—or I could just as well insert the word "ethanol"—compared to petroleum diesel. Without the tax credit, petroleum marketers will be unwilling to purchase the more expensive biodiesel and demand will vanish. From this standpoint of the tax credit, I hope everybody remembers that whether it is wind, ethanol, solar, biodiesel, biomass, or geothermal, it takes tax credits to get these programs off the ground. Right now, wind energy is a big industry in my State, not only from the production standpoint but from the standpoint of manufacturing of components because, in 1992, I got a wind energy tax credit passed; otherwise, we would not have wind energy and everybody touts wind energy today. It is a little bit like the very infant biodiesel industry we have. One might not think biofuels are an infant industry because ethanol has been around for 30 years, but biodiesel is about where ethanol was 30 years ago. So we want to help move this industry along so eventually it can stand on its own legs. That is the motive behind all these tax credits, to get an infant industry started and then they stand on their own.

In 2008, getting back to the jobs in this industry, biodiesel supported 51,000 green jobs. Because of the downturn in the economy and the credit crisis, the biodiesel industry has already shed 29,000 green jobs. So now what about the rest of those jobs? That is what my remarks are all about, and that is what getting the tax credit renewed before the end of the year is all about. Because the industry is currently operating at just around 15 percent of capacity. Without an extension of the tax credit, all U.S. biodiesel production will grind to a halt. Plants will be shuttered and workers will be let go.

No one should be surprised by the upcoming expiration of this tax credit. It was extended most recently in October 2008. So we have known for 14 months; hence, nobody should be surprised that it would need to be extended by the end of this year.